Bulletin: Men's Basketball team ties for league lead. See page 12

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NIAGARA NEWS

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Feb. 4, 2000 FREE VOLUME 30 ISSUE 9

Niagara News is produced by the Journalism - Print students at Niagara College, Welland Campus

Wild and crazy college radio guys

David Robinson (left), a second-year student in the Broadcasting — Radio, Television and Film (BRTF) program, is the production director. Liam Myers is the former music director and a third-year BRTF student. Robinson and Myers encourage anyone with an original show idea to stop by the broadcasting booth in the central concourse of the Simcoe building at the Welland campus and submit a proposal.

Photo by Jason Vizbulis

Tuition 'going up for sure' — Reles

Post-grad costs stay at current levels

By JOHN ROBBINS
Staff Writer

Niagara College has decided post-graduate tuition rates will remain at 1999-2000 levels.

However, next September's new and returning Niagara College students should expect to see an increase in the college's base tuition rate for most other programs, according to a member of the college's Board of Governors.

"It (tuition) is going up for sure," said Kevin Reles, student representative on the board, in an interview with the *Niagara News*.

"The buzz is a five-per-cent increase this year."

While the college has decided there will be no increase in tuition rates for post-graduate programs, no decision has been made about tuition rates for other Niagara College programs.

Hans van der Slagt, vice-president of administration at Niagara College, said he did not want to speculate about next year's tuition rates.

Van der Slagt said the college has not yet received current tuition fee guidelines from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, information which is necessary for purposes of planning next year's budget.

The draft 2000-2001 budget will not be presented to the Board of Governors for approval until the board's March meeting.

Last March, the Board of Governors approved a 10-per-cent tuition hike for most post-secondary programs, and a 20-per-cent increase for post-graduate programs.

The provincial government has imposed a cap on the amount colleges can increase tuition each year 10 per cent with some exceptions. Of this amount, 30 per cent must be directed to student aid.

"I don't think anyone wants to see it (tuition) go up," said Reles. "As a student myself, I don't want it to go up."

"Change costs money," he said.

Reles noted physical improvements to all three Niagara College campuses over the last several years, which, he said, make the college "a more appealing place to be."

"I think the college is doing a great job. The money being used is being used well."

At least one board member said he wants to keep tuition levels where they are.

"I'm definitely going to be opposed to any kind of increase in tuition," said David Miskolczi, labour representative on the Board of Governors.

"I'm concerned that the college is going to price itself out of the range of many students."

Referring to last year's 10-per-cent tuition increase, Miskolczi said, "I haven't had that kind of one-year (pay) raise, in order to put my kids through college."

Asked whether the college should dip into its $2.6 million accumulated surplus to make up for a shortfall in revenues should tuition rates remain the same, Miskolczi said, "I would go into a one-year deficit for the sake of the students."

"We've put a lot of burden on the students and I think it's time we gave them something in return," he said.

Board of Govenors to fill seats

By JOHN ROBBINS
Staff Writer

Niagara College's Board of Governors is hanging out the Help Wanted sign.

With two vacancies, the 17-member Board of Governors has asked its nominating and new-member search committee to begin the process of filling the positions.

"We're in a unique situation whereby we almost didn't reach a quorum at the last meeting," said Pia Sandstrom Arnds, chair of the board's nominating and new-member search committee.

Sandstrom Arnds said the committee members will be looking for candidates who are "long-term thinkers and eager to share the vision of the college."

Sandstrom Arnds said the committee has already compiled a "short-list" of candidates from the community, but members of the public can submit to the board secretary, the name of someone they would like to nominate. Once the committee has completed the selection process, the committee's recommendations are taken to the full board for approval. Final approval of candidates for the Board of Governors must come from the Ontario Council of Regents (CoR), the provincial government agency which oversees Ontario's 25 community colleges.

Sandstrom Arnds said the board hopes to complete this nomination process and receive confirmation from CoR as early as April or May. The new board members would most likely begin their term in September.

While there is no deadline for external nominations, the nominating and new-member seareh committee next meets on Feb. 9.

At the next meeting of the Board of Governors, the board is scheduled to elect a new vice-chair, a position vacant since the Dec. 26 death of board member Michael Duffy, 53, of Grimsby, Ont.

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INTERNATIONAL

World-traveller teaching ESL at Niagara

From Spain to Korea, every chance a learning experience

By NATSUKO TAMURA
Staff Writer

With her positive frame of mind, she has no negative memories and no regrets.

"Every opportunity is a learning experience."

That's how Christie Salmon thinks.

Salmon has been teaching English to people worldwide and is currently an instructor in the English as a Second Language (ESL) program at Niagara College.

Salmon, 29, of St. Catharines, is back here after realizing one of her dreams last year — going to Spain.

Her experience there was not what she expected it to be, Salmon says. "The city where I lived had a little bit of negative feelings towards foreigners because it was a new city and had lots of problems, such as illegal immigrants and prostitutes," she says.

"The city was struggling and people were not respectful. It was very difficult to fit in."

She had a short-term contract with an English school there, but, she says, she decided to come back after just a few months.

"It was not the nightmare, but just not the experience I would hope."

On the positive side, she enjoyed travelling around the country and visiting famous places.

CHRISTIE SALMON

She says she "certainly" doesn't regret going to Spain as she "really" wanted to visit the country, but the school was not good for her. Later, her Spanish friend told her the place was not a good choice for someone to come to for the first time.

Through her experience in Spain, she says her personal goals became clear — what she wants and does not want.

Not only does she like to teach, but she also likes to learn.

"I really, really want to speak Spanish," she says. She's been picking up the language little by little for the past couple of years and by taking a night course at the college. Her strong desire to study Spanish has already brought her a new path in life.

"I'll try to stay in Canada for my parents this year and hope to go to South America next year."

This was not her first trip abroad. On New Year's Eve in 1996, she was on her way to a country in the Far East— Korea — again to teach English.

Her first impression of Korea was of the ranges of mountains during the flight from Seoul to Andong, she recalls.

Encouraged by students from Korea, who used to stay with Salmon's family, she took an opportunity to teach at a university in Korea. She says she was well prepared for that trip by reading books about Korea, learning the language and tasting its exotic food.

Because of those activities, she says she made a smooth transition to a Korean culture without experiencing major culture shock.

Starting in 1997, she worked at a university for two years in a "cultural and traditional" city, Andong, which is located in the centre of the country.

She says the course she taught was mandatory and English conversation-based. She says the course was "successful" although the technique was a fairly new concept to Korean students.

Living in a city where people weren't exposed to English, she says she enjoyed traditional festivals and cultural activities.

While in Korea, her curiosity led her to take a journey to South Asia. She says she traveled by herself to Malaysia and Singapore.

Unfortunately, she says she had a bad experience in Malaysia and she doesn't recommend it to a single female backpacker, but she's glad that she did go.

"It was good experience. I wouldn't have gone there if I hadn't gone to Korea."

'I was not ready to come back, but I felt I should.'

After two years of staying in Korea, "I was not ready to come back, but I felt I should," she says. The university was undergoing lots of changes, and she wanted to leave with positive feelings.

"It was really hard," she says because she had a Korean boyfriend at that time and she had to leave everything behind.

Salmon sees the changes in herself.

She says she increased her level of confidence and gained a "very" rich understanding of the country.

"I felt privileged and I'm one of the luckiest people ever."

"I appreciate (the) kindness people showed me. I was invited home many times and they (Korean people) were so hospitable."

She says she learned from them how to be more hospitable to people who are visiting.

When you have a chance, just make time for them, instead of saying "later," she says.

Back in Canada, she experienced some reverse culture shock. For example, she was at first startled to see so many kinds of cereals at the grocery store, since she was used to few choices of cereals at her local store in Korea. As well, she thought

Canadians were rude, compared with the high-standards in the service industry that Korea has.

"I kept bowing to people. That was weird," she says.

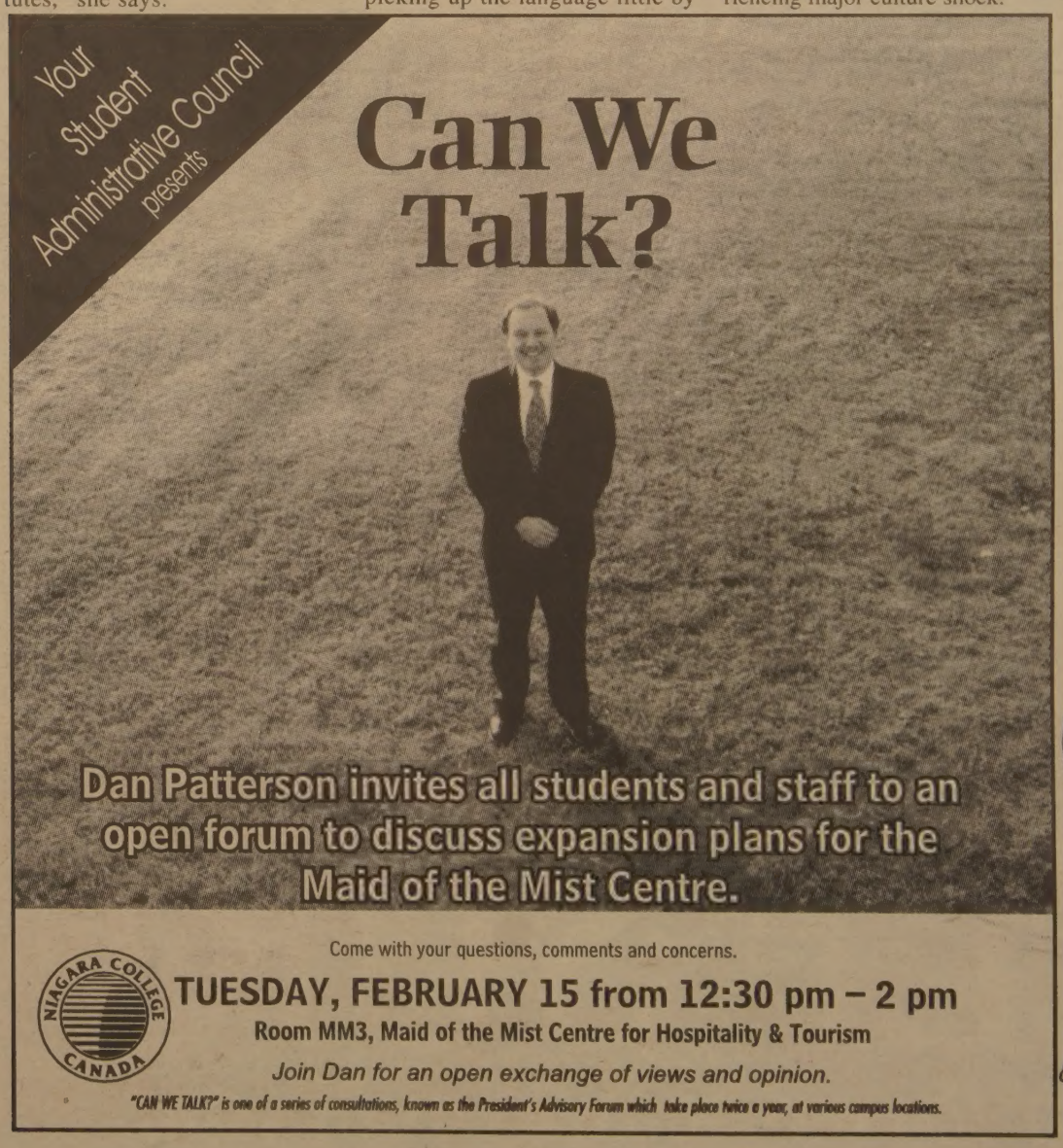
Salmon started her career as a teacher in 1993 after graduating from Brock University in St. Catharines with a Bachelor of *Arts in Teaching English as a* Second Language.

She first got her position at Niagara College in April 1994 as a part-time English teacher for immigrants and refugees. Later, Salmon began to work daytime at Niagara while teaching at night too.

Referring to a night class, she says it was quite a switch from daytime students to evening. Having been separated from family and loved ones, "many (evening) students didn't want be here and lots of them had emotional scars."

"The atmosphere in class was very different," she says, adding that ESL students are enthusiastic to learn English.

"I had to be very sensitive to the materials I dealt with in class and to make sure everyone got along. It was a very good experience."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CAMPUS COVERAGE

Artists offered open canvas at Glendale

Art students welcome to participate in open contest

By MARTIN McQUAIG
Staff Writer

Niagara College's Glendale campus in Niagara-on-the-Lake is about to get a facelift.

With $25,000 left in the coffers of construction funding, Hans van der Slagt, the college's vice-president administrative services, spearheaded the Art at Glendale task force.

The task force recommended that an open contest be held to allow Niagara area artists to submit proposals to a jury.

On Jan. 22, an information session and tour were held at the Glendale campus. More than 40 people attended the session, and took a tour of the six sites (four inside, and two outside the building) that are up for improvements.

"There are very few opportunities like this for artists in Niagara, so we're breaking ground, to a certain extent," said van der Slagt.

The jury will commission as few as two, but as many as five, artists based on their proposals during the two phases of the competition. The selected artists, who must be residents of the Niagara Region, will split $16,000 in prize money.

The deadline for Phase 1 submissions is March 13, when applicants will submit their concepts in written and slide presentation formats. Artists whose proposals are approved will be contacted for the second phase of the competition, when they will make a more detailed proposal to the jury.

The artists' works will be installed Aug. 15 to Aug. 30, with an unveiling ceremony planned for sometime in September.

'Students have an opportunity to leave their legacy through these pieces. . .' — Darrell Neufeld

"To have a public art commission like this," said Elizabeth Chitty, competition co-ordinator, "is a very, very exciting step" for artists in the Niagara region.

"This is an important opportunity for artists in this community that they don't often get," she added.

Darrell Neufeld, executive assistant to the president at Niagara College and member of the Art at Glendale task force, says this is a "great opportunity" for Niagara student artists as well.

"We'd love to see some student submissions," he said. "This project will further enhance the campus. Students have an opportunity to leave their legacy through these pieces, and we certainly encourage them to submit proposals."

Expressions of interest, the first phase of the competition, may be sent to Art Competition, c/o Elaine Burke, P.O. Box 1005, 300 Woodlawn Rd., Welland, Ont. L3B 5S2 before March 13.

The North Wing concourse is one of six sites at the college's Glendale campus that will be livened up with some local artwork. Niagara area artists and student artists will make proposals to a jury beginning in March. The art will be in place for the Fall 2000 term.

Photo by Martin McQuaig

Editor shares life lessons in journalism

What's Up Kids? editor offers some helpful hints

By CASSANDRA SIMONS
Staff Writer

Writing is a craft, says the editor of a St. Catharines magazine.

Paul Paterson, 32, of Fonthill, talked to 35 of Niagara College's second-year Journalism-Print program students on Jan. 31.

Paterson was editor of the Port Colborne News for three years prior to becoming editor of What's Up Kids? magazine in St. Catharines.

He said he stayed at the Port Colborne News until it folded "when it became the victim of the business."

Paterson spoke about being a freelance writer, being a professional and using local resources.

"At some point during your career you will have to freelance. If you freelance, you have to be a professional," he said, emphasizing that requirement applied whether the writer was working for a newspaper or magazine.

"Being professional means you have to understand the craft. One way to master the craft is to read everything."

By analysing how the author used the various tools of writing, the reader can see how the writer made the piece effective or ineffective, he said.

'The world is your oyster right now, and the Internet has made it possible.' — Paterson

Paterson also advised the students to use their editorial skills. "Think of story ideas that are interesting. Write the story interesting. Think about different types of stories. Politics? Controversy is what drives newspapers."

He said the more current the story, the better. "Currency is the ability to pitch something in a new way."

He encouraged the students to challenge themselves. "Take on stories you haven't done before. Work on things you don't agree with and on stories you don't understand."

To be a good journalist, he said, "you have to be pro-active, you have to be aggressive."

He explained that when a journalist listens to an interviewee the journalist must listen with all of the senses.

"Be aware of everything that's going on where you're interviewing."

He cautioned the students to be "very clear" when they are interviewing someone who wants to be "off the record."

"If you can get someone to be off the record and then confirm the information, you have an edge. When you go in knowing something because someone else has told you, you have power."

He said another nugget about writing is that the writer can have fun, adding, "At the end of the day you can say you did something that will maybe reinforce or change the way a person feels."

"Writers write because that's what they do."

He said with the help of the Internet, writers can live anywhere in the world and submit articles to newspapers.

"The world is your (the students') oyster right now, and the Internet has made it possible."

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EDITORIAL

The Niagara News is a practical lab for the Journalism-Print program, covering the college community and other areas of interest.
Opinions expressed are not necessarily those of the management of the Niagara News or the administration of
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Quest for peace must continue

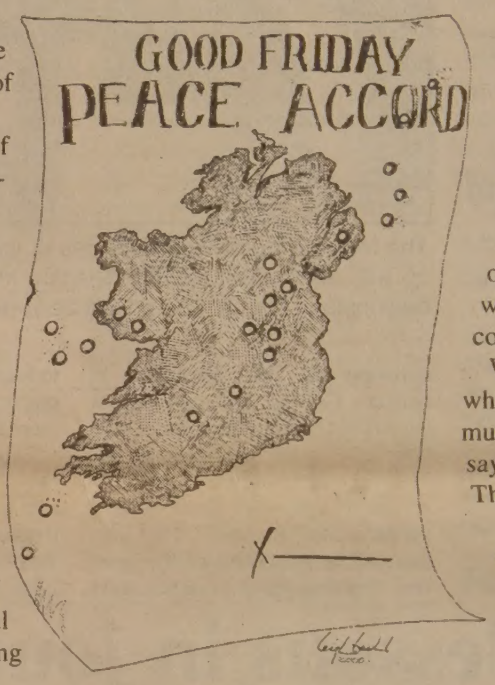
The quest for peace continues in Northern Ireland.

Once again the spotlight has turned to the Irish peace process and its failing attempt to purge the Emerald Isle of the guns of its forefathers.

I can't agree with this. I am all for peace but the history of Ireland, and especially Northern Ireland, is rooted in violence and freedom fighting.

In 1534, during the Protestant Reformation sweeping through much of Europe, King Henry VIII made himself the head of the English church. He decided he wanted no trouble from the Irish and, therefore, began to destroy much of the old ways in Ireland. For example, he replaced the existing church with the Protestant Church of Ireland. The fighting he started in England lasted more than 200 years, and in Ireland it hasn't ceased.

Every new generation is passed the torch of hatred and disgust. To be part of the Irish culture (whether Catholic or Protestant) requires an unequivocal anger about the other side. Seen by Irish Catholics, Northern Ireland is the spoil of invasion, kept when all other land was returned to its rightful sovereignty. To the Protestant majority, however, it is nothing more than home.



The Irish Republican Army (IRA) is much the same as the Americans were a few hundred years ago. The IRA does not want to be under British rule. The members of the IRA want Northern Ireland to be returned to its rightful state. Like it or not, in a separatist movement sparked initially by difference in religion, violence is often unavoidable.

The members of the IRA, I believe, truly have no intention of handing over their weapons and, if their guns are silent, then why should they? I would not want to live in a country where I couldn't own a gun.

What needs to happen is a stronger hand in dealing with those who attempt to trip up the peace talks. The government in Ireland must go after the dissidents and murderers, not the weapons. The saying is as always, *"Guns don't kill people; people kill people."* There is a lot of truth in this old and overused cliché.

The quest for peace must continue, but something as small as handing in your guns cannot be allowed to disrupt all that has been gained.

Matt Holley

Advancing technology has its drawbacks

It's funny how in a world that's developed so many tools to make life simple we can still find handfuls of complication. Evolution, as we know it, is a sham. With every step forward, there's a setback.

"They" are always telling us that technology is for the people, to ease our lives. Microwaves were invented to make life easier. However, the sperm count of a man never got lower from standing beside a stove.

A full, nutritious meal takes the same amount of time to make in a microwave as it does to make "the old-fashioned way." I use my microwave only to warm up food and make popcorn.

Computers, I have to admit, have helped me every day. They basically run the world, don't they? But who hasn't left one in a fit of rage because it broke down, froze up or deleted something important? Would the world have had to spend billions of dollars on Y2K for typewriters? OK, that's a stretch.

Advancing technologically and evolving as a world have nothing to do with keeping our lives simple. It's all about satisfying needs: the human needs to succeed, to create and to destroy. Cars break down, computers crash, subways cease to run, e-mail gets lost, phones cut out and planes crash. All of these so-called conveniences make life faster, not easier.

We make new tools to replace "the old" and to improve on what already exists. Making them implies getting rid of complications, but they don't. Everything comes with complications. Evolution as we know it is "easy," but evolution in its true form is only an acceleration of activity.

Lisa Taft

Your voice or opinion is welcome in our Letters to the Editor section. Our policy regarding letter submissions is this: All letters must be received on the Friday one week prior to publication. Each letter must include the writer's name, college identification number and program of study.
All letters must be signed and include a day and evening telephone number for verification use only.
All letters can be mailed or brought to the Niagara News newsroom, Room S212, Simcoe Building, Welland Campus.

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VIEWPOINTS

Squeegee kids all washed up

By MATT HOLLEY
Staff Writer

Column

Get the hell outta the street. Finally, after years of being pestered by squeegee kids and other minions of the street, Toronto residents can rest easy now.

They no longer have to feel guilty when they walk past a man begging for money on the street. They can hold their head high and ignore him. Should he bother them, and they feel uncomfortable, he stands to be in a bit of trouble.

I personally am all for this new law. If we are going to pretend that we live in a civilized and upscale world then we should not have to be tempted to perform random acts of kindness. I don't like giving my money to the government, so why would
I want to give money to help my fellow citizen?

I realize I have never had to walk in his or her shoes and I realize I probably never will have to, but that is only because I believe I possess the drive and the determination not to allow myself to take that road. There is no money to be made on the street now anyway.

As for those squeegee kids who make $80 to $100 a day, did they really think the government would let them get away with not paying tax on their "income"? This is never going to happen. Our wonderful government does not believe in keeping its hands out of the pockets of its citizens.

The streets of Toronto are now free of squeegee kids and aggressive panhandlers. The problem is, how long will it take before they either move to the sex and drug trade or move into my neighbourhood?

As I said before, get the hell outta the street.

Caring friends make college time special

By SHANNON MASTALER
Staff Writer

Column

I consider myself to be incredibly lucky.

I have a life full of friends that are wonderful. They have made my college experience one I will never forget.

After two years of living away from home, going to school, making decisions and paying bills, I am convinced I will move on from here a better and more capable person.

I give my friends a lot of credit for this. They have taught me how to laugh at even the most stressful times, and they understand what it means when I say, "I'm broke." They are the ones who have been my family when I didn't have any around, and they are the ones I can count on for anything I need.

I live in a house with five other girls, and it's a wonderful feeling knowing that when I leave Welland, I will be leaving with a part of each of them, for I will be leaving with five new friends.

For me, my friends are a necessity in my life. Without them to calm me down, teach me, laugh with me and cry with me, I would not be happy. They have witnessed some of the hardest moments in my life and been part of some of the happiest moments of my life. They have made an incredible impact on my life.

For me, my friends are a necessity of my life.

I will never forget these past two years. They will always be regarded as, in my eyes, the most meaningful and significant years of my life. It has been a time when I've met friends, gained experience and knowledge, and grown as a person.

To all my friends, I hope all the experiences we've shared, all the memories we've made, and all the fun we've had will be enough to make your college years as wonderful as mine have been.

You have all individually left a unique impact on my life. You have all marked a place in my heart, and you are all part of the best times I have ever had.

Letters to the Editor

Niagara College staff, students join Santa Claus parade

Dear Editor:

I want to take this opportunity to indicate how much I enjoy reading the Niagara News and how I look forward to the articles on so many different topics.

Certainly, work well done by the Journalism-Print program students.

I would like to draw attention to a particular event that took place on Dec. 11, 1999, in Niagara-on-the-Lake: the Santa Claus parade.

I was hoping that it might have been mentioned in the Niagara News, but since it wasn't, I hope that it isn't too late to give some deserved recognition to all who participated.

It was a very cold day, but the spirit of the season was evident. Many students from the college participated: members of the Student Administrative Council, the International Department and the college's Athletics Department, as well as staff of the college.

It was really great to see such a large turnout and the demonstrated college spirit at the parade.

Shown above are some of the happy Niagara College participants in Niagara-on-the-Lake's Santa Claus parade Dec.11.

Submitted photo

It was a very cold day, but the spirit of the season was evident.

I think a good time was had by all.

I am enclosing a photograph of the group which I hope captures the spirit of the event.

Again, congratulations on your newspaper.

Sincerely,
Saundra Patterson,
St. Catharines.

Bowl for Kids raising money for Big Brothers in Niagara

Dear Editor:

This is an open letter to the students of Niagara College.

Bowl for Kids Sake is seeking the support of our community college.

This annual event assists Big Brothers of South Niagara in raising the dollars needed to provide the five programs it currently offers to boys, girls and their families in the Welland, Port Colborne, Pelham and Wainfleet areas.

Programs like our One to One, In-School Mentoring, Big Bunch for Un-Matched Kids, and our clinical counselling all require community support.

We are thankful each year for the United Way which will provide our agency with approximately 39 per cent of the funding we need this year; however, the rest is up to us.

Your participation in Bowl for Kids Sake will assist the agency in achieving a goal of $20,000.

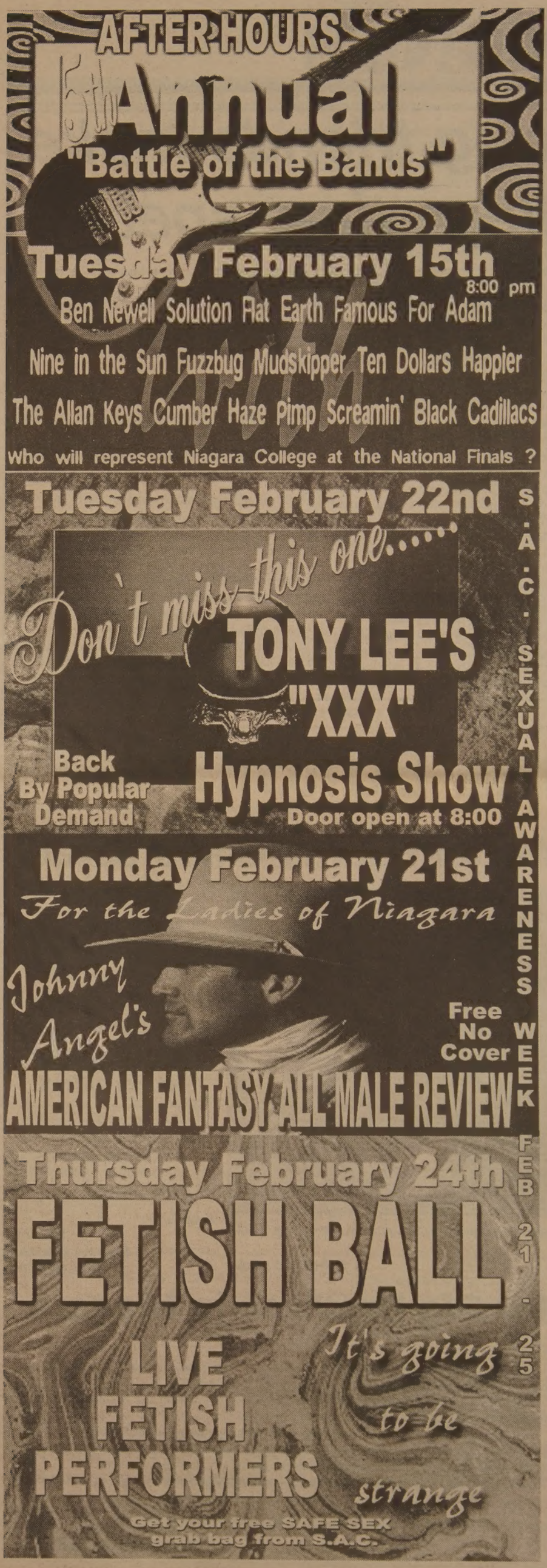
Sponsor pledge sheets are available. Should you have questions, please do not hesitate to call 735-0570. We hope to see you or your team at our event.

New this year is the addition of Ten-pin bowling, along with our regular Five-pin Fun format.

A real neat event within your program could be the gathering of pledges in the amount of $3,000 for one bowler representing your program, then raffle off the Trip for Two to Las Vegas as part of your yearend celebrations, or for some other special event.

We wish to take this opportunity to thank you for any consideration given to this request.

Yours truly,
Greg Whelan,
Executive Director
Big Brothers of South Niagara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SCHOLARSHIPS

Debt, not marks receive awards

By TARA PURPURA
Staff Writer
Column

More than 35,000 post-secondary students in Ontario received a gift from the Canadian government during the Christmas break, called Millennium Scholarships.

Many of the recipients I have spoken to are delighted with the surprise gift of $3,000 but did not know why they received it.

I am here to enlighten those people as to the reason they received the funds.

What is being called a scholarship is really a grant from the government to students who are receiving loans from the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP). The $3,000 amount is being placed directly into the bank accounts of these students so the money can only be used to repay the loan.

How can the government call this a scholarship? The selection of recipients is based not upon marks but upon financial need.

Assistant Heather Bradley, who works in Speaker of the House Gilbert Parent's office in Ottawa, said that in Ontario about 190,000 students receive OSAP. A screening process was done on those students, ranking them by financial need. Those in the "greatest need" were sent a letter telling them they would receive a scholarship.

The Canadian Millennium Scholarship Foundation created the general scholarship which represents what has been called a "$215-million investment in the future of young Canadian students," said Jean C. Monty, chairman for the Foundation on Dec. 8, 1999.

To my understanding, the word scholarship involves the title "scholar" but the selection committee overlooked that small fact.

If the federal government truly wished to give "scholarships" then the selection process should have involved some sort of academic achievement, which would ordinarily thin the herd. Don't get me wrong. There were some academic requirements imposed but hang on to your seat for what they are.

Students who attended 60 per cent of their first-year classes and maintained a minimum academic mark of 50 per cent were awarded a whopping $3,000 of taxpayers' money as a reward for adequate scholastic effort.

On the other hand, God bless those of you who received the money and have the marks and dedication to your course, for which you would normally be considered for academic achievement-based awards.

But I digress.

The government has now added a surprise little twist to the millennium scholarships. The funds — when you go to file your income tax return remember this — are considered taxable income. In other words, your newly discovered contribution toward OSAP is taxable.

Out of our pocket, into government coffers, back into your pocket (many of you who, I should add, should be working considering all the spare time you had after only attending 60 per cent of your classes) and back into federal pockets.

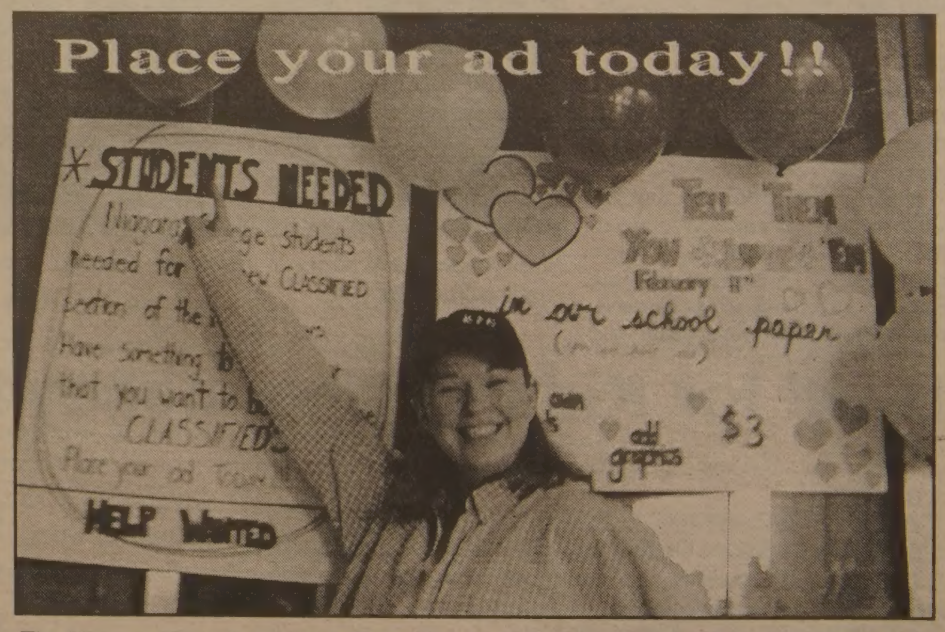
As a hypothetical example, the province has already forgiven $3,000 of a student's total $10,000 OSAP loan. This leaves $7,000 to be repaid. The Ontario government has effectively said the forgivable portion has been addressed already. Thus, it takes the $3,000 scholarship funding as a way of paying itself back for the tax-relief already given.

This is not hypothetical. It's happening.

To those students who were shocked their marks would allow them to receive a scholarship, I say, "Welcome to the real world of Canada."

You have received an award, leading you to believe you did something exemplary to deserve it. I came along to tell you the truth which, trust me, the government and OSAP did not want you to know. Now you are being taxed from your award funds.

There's a kick in the head if I ever saw one.



The Niagara News is adding a Classified section. A loonie will get you 30 words. Ads are available to anyone who has something to buy or sell. You can send a message to your friends, find a new roommate or a ride to school. A representative will be available on Tuesdays from 9 a.m. to 10 a.m. in front of the cafeteria at the Glendale campus, and from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in front of the library at the Welland campus.

Photo by John Robbins

CRITTERS

Groundhog predicts six more weeks of winter

Wiarton Willie steps out of his dark hole to predict delayed Spring

By MEGAN ROSS
Staff Writer

"While Wee Willie sleeps / In the town winter creeps / Amid the snores and slumber / The people await and wonder / The snow we anticipate / The roads closed at any rate / With the slow February dawn / To Wiarton the world is gone."

That is a poem about Wiarton Willie, the famous Ontario groundhog whose home is Wiarton, Ont.

On Feb. 2, Willie crawled out of his burrow and saw his shadow, which scared him back into the ground for six more weeks of sleep.

Since 1956, every Feb. 2, at 8 a.m., Wiarton Willie emerges to predict the remaining length of winter. In all these years he, his fathers and grandfathers have been 90 per cent correct.

The tradition of Groundhog Day dates back to the 1700s, when German settlers brought a tradition, known as Candlemas Day, to the new world.

Candlemas Day came between the Winter Solstice and the first of spring. On that day, it was said, if the weather were fair, the second half of winter would be stormy and cold.

Candlemas was celebrated all over Europe. Members of the Christian faith adapted the tradition to include a custom of their own. They saw this day as one on which clergy bless candles and hand them out to the townspeople to light up the dark winter nights.

The earliest American Groundhog Day was recorded in 1841, in a shopkeeper's diary. The entry read: "Last Tuesday, the second, was Candlemas Day, the day on which, according to the Germans, the Ground Hog peeps out of his winter quarters and if he sees his shadow, he pops back for another six-week nap, but if the day be cloudy, he remains out as the winter is to be moderate."

> *'. . . it is difficult to know who is going to be happy with the prediction. I never know until the moment which way it will go.'*
>
> *— Wiarton Willie*

The Germans originally watched to see if a badger saw his shadow. In Pennsylvania, a groundhog was chosen as the replacement.

In an e-mail asking how Wiarton Willie feels about Groundhog Day, he wrote, "My ancestor had an accuracy rate of 90 per cent; this year it is all up to me! While it does seem like a lot of pressure, my friends here in Wiarton, in the South Bruce Peninsula, are very supportive and it is very exciting to watch the preparations for the festival.

"There are many people who would love six more weeks of winter since it means more time for snowmobiling and skiing, and then there are gardeners and skateboarders who would want the freedom from the snow and ice, so it is difficult to know who is going to be happy with the prediction. I never know until the moment which way it will go."

To contact Willie, visit his Web site at http://www.wiarton-willie.org/index.cfm or send him a letter at http://www.wiarton-willie.org/contact.html.

Project aims at saving barn owls

By MEGAN ROSS
Staff Writer

Barn Owls are endangered species.

The barn owl recovery project held an information workshop on Sunday, Jan. 23, at the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture's Field Research Auditorium in Simcoe, Ont.

Barn owls' range extends from southwestern Ontario to southern British Columbia. Since barn owls are on the endangered species list, the project is focused on saving them and their habitat.

The barn owl population has decreased in the past 50 years because old wooden barns are now usually replaced by aluminum ones, thus removing the birds' main nesting ground.

Officials say one of the recovery project's goals is to place nesting boxes throughout Ontario for the owls. The project would also like to create 1,000 hectares of grassland as a hunting habitat for the owls.

The main prey of the owls is mice and small rodents. Since grasslands are being developed, there is a proportional loss of food sources, which is contributing to the decline in the population of barn owls.

At the moment four pairs of owls reside in southern Ontario. The project wants to raise the population to about 20 pairs by 2003.

Although the project is based in the Haldimand-Norfolk area, officials hope to extend it into the Niagara region and all over southern Ontario in the next few years.

This year, they want to track the barn owls to find out migration routes and mortality rates.

For more information, contact The Ontario Barn Owl Recovery Project at 1-888-448-2473.

Diane Harris-Wakeling, of Niagara-on-the-Lake, was delighted to be a winner in our recent Answer the Question contest. She won two tickets to Titanic: The Exhibition which is at the Exhibition Place in Toronto until Feb. 10. Investors Group is exhibit sponsor.

Staff photo

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"Well put together, I enjoyed every minute of the exhibition. Excellent!" – Trevor B.

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One pumpin' system

1929 Ford pick-up

Speedorama 2000, Toronto

1999 Chevrolet Corvette

1977 Ford Mustang Cobra II

1969 Camaro Z28

1994 Dodge Viper RT/10

Corvette Club of Canada

1950 Merc Illusion Radical Custom

Photos by Matt Holley

Hot cars, and good times

CAMPUS COVERAGE

Bookstore improving value for services

Bookstore aims to improve services

By KYM CRAWFORD
Staff Writer

At some point it is inevitable that college students will find they'll need to buy books and supporting materials required by instructors their courses.

Most students turn to the pricey, yet indispensable bookstore to get these required materials. Some students find the prices of some books a bit shocking at first.

Marilyn Courtney, of Port Dalhousie, general manager of Niagara College's Welland and Glendale campus bookstores, says this is due to the fact that, before college, textbooks were supplied free of charge to students by the provincial government through school boards. Now students themselves are faced with "the reality of having to buy their books."

Courtney, who has been at the bookstore for four years, says the students reaction may also be a result of a lack of proper budgeting on the students' part.

Barnes and Noble Missouri Book Services, one of the largest suppliers of books to colleges and universities in North America, now operates the bookstore, which used to be operated by the college itself.

The contract with Barnes and Noble included an agreement not to raise markup percentages. The company uses one of the lowest markups on books in North America, says Courtney. This should come as good news to students. Markup value is determined by the publishers, who, Courtney says "are not student friendly." Market value includes the cost of shipping, and paying for staffing and US exchange when necessary. Courtney says she urges instructors "to buy Canadian" because of the current high exchange rate.

"A percentage of book costs also comes back to the college," says Courtney.

The bookstore does look for ways to help students cut costs. "We encourage students to buy used books," says Courtney. "We also have a book buyback, for which students receive half the cost of the book and we keep trying for more and more."

> ***'We encourage students to buy used books.'***
> ***— Marilyn Courtney***

"Most schools don't have the book buyback," says Courtney, who sees this as a big advantage for students.

The bookstore operates, generally, as any bookstore operates, but differs in its ordering. Instructors tell the bookstore which materials to order. How much is based on supply and demand, as well as enrolment. However, the bookstore independently controls the selling of best sellers.

"We try to order from wholesalers first and use publishers as a last resort," says Courtney.

In addition to books and supplies, the bookstore sells candy and a wide array of clothing bearing the Niagara College logo. The clothes are purchased from different Canadian clothing suppliers because of the bookstore's strict anti-sweatshop regulations. Courtney says the facility is "tightly controlled" in this respect.

Last year, the bookstore tried selling residence products, such as toilet paper and laundry detergent, but was not very successful in doing so.

Courtney says the bookstore is always looking for ways to improve with "constant customer service training."

Another benefit to students is the part-time employment opportunities.

"I would love to be able to hire all students, but with their different schedules, it's very difficult," says Courtney.

Third-year Broadcasting — Radio, Television and Film (BRTF) student Sarah Mole, 21, of Hepworth, says she enjoys her temporary position at the bookstore. "The people are very pleasant to work with."

Simone Smith, also a third-year BRTF student, says, "I like working here very much. It's very pleasurable working with the senior staff."

The bookstore's regular hours are 8:15 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday.

Marilyn Courtney, general manager of the Welland and Glendale campus bookstores, says bookstore staff undergo constant customer service training.

Photo by Kym Crawford

College requesting $270,000

By CASSANDRA SIMONS
Staff Writer

Niagara College is requesting more than $270,000 from the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities, through the Aboriginal Education Training Strategy (AETS) initiative, to be used in the Aboriginal Education Access (AEA) centres.

Sheri Longboat, manager of AEA, said to secure funds through AETS, the annual proposal has to be researched, created, reviewed and accepted. Those steps are done in collaboration with the Aboriginal community.

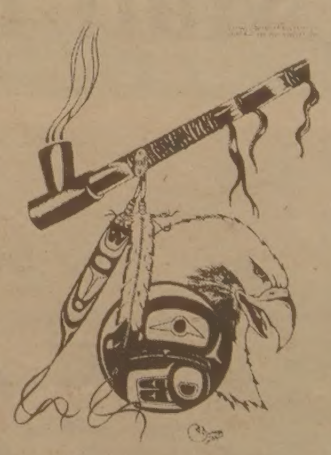
"The Aboriginal Education management circle was created to ensure the Aboriginal education is maintained culturally appropriate in direction, while keeping in mind the needs of future generations," said Longboat.

The proposals for 2000 and 2001 were submitted to maintain the operation of Aboriginal programs and services.

"This includes the maintenance of the AEA centre at both the Glendale and Welland campuses, and future plans include, of course, expanding to have a presence at the Maid of the Mist Centre (in Niagara Falls) as well."

The actual total requested is $273,656, which, if the ministry approves, will be allocated to office staff, specialized student support services and community-based program delivery of the Native Geographic Information Systems — Technology at Six Nations Polytech.

"Last year our office secured a total of $209,000. From the possible $300,000 distributed among 16 colleges across Ontario, Niagara College's Aboriginal Education Access secured $104,000 to be used for program delivery start-up and development."



Aboriginal Education Access

Longboat said part of creating successful proposals is making sure there's a "true need and commitment from all involved."

"This year, as I'm sure with others, college staff, Aboriginal office staff and the Aboriginal community combined efforts to help ensure that Aboriginal education continues on strong at Niagara College.

"We look forward to announcing the successful results of our submission in early spring."

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Project offers on-the-job training

Partnership offers Niagara College students practical working experience

By SHANNON MASTALER
Staff Writer

Landcare Niagara, in partnership with Niagara College's Ecosystem Restoration Post-graduate program, is working to give students practical experience.

Landcare Niagara is a conservation group for private landowners that received $131,400 through the Trillium Fund for restoring privately owned land around the Niagara Region, key priority land. The Trillium Fund is funded by the Ontario government from gaming revenues and it provides monies to community-oriented services and projects.

"We were given money in order to provide landowners with plant material," said Mike Rose, of Landcare Niagara, "to have a better flow of wildlife."

Rose said landowners must sign an agreement "they will not remove trees after they have been planted."

Rose said the landowners may plant the trees themselves or with a partner from around the region.

Al Unwin, co-ordinator of the Ecosystem Restoration program, said, "It is part of the students' final project they have to complete. They have to develop a strategy to reform it (disturbed land)."

Unwin said the students will be working in three- to four-member groups with organizations. "It's like a consultant/client relationship."

Rose said the students will benefit as well. "They would prefer to do a project out in the field to get some practical experience for the future. They provide landowners with technical expertise."

Unwin said the program is still relatively rare because of its specific focus. "We solely focus on restoration."

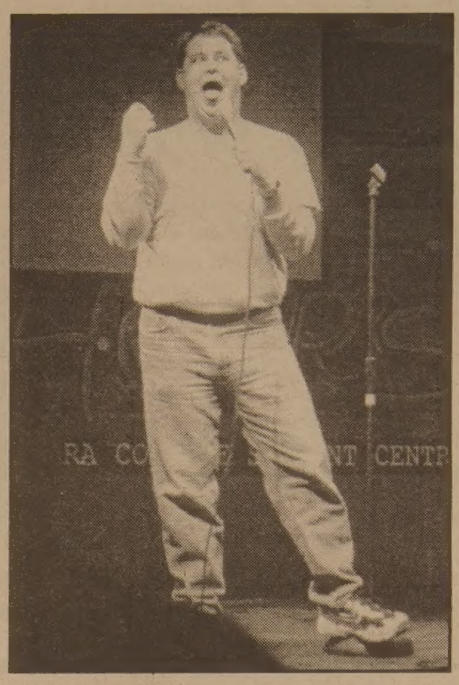
"The project will benefit everyone," said Unwin.

He said the community will win, and students and Landcare Niagara get the expertise of the students.

"Everyone wins."

ENTERTAINMENT

Comedians bring the house down



A hilarious Chuck Byrn delivers a solid show at After Hours.
Photo by Mark Garrett

By MARK GARRETT
Staff Writer

It was a great crowd and great comedians as After Hours put on its finest comedy show this year.

The pub at the Welland campus was the place to be on Jan. 26, with 12 beers for $12 and a warm atmosphere. Flickering candles on each tabletop set the mood for a hilarious display of comedy.

Chuck Byrn, 28, who has been dubbed by his peers as "the Toaster Stroodle guy," earned the respect of the audience as well as their laughs. The five-and-a-half-year veteran of stand-up comedy described a golfing trip on which he was able to drink only American beer.

"I drank 36 Miller Lights and turned three bunkers into water hazards," says Byrn.

The soft-spoken Byrn (when not on stage) says, "I get paid to do something I'd happily do for free."

Byrn has done "a couple" of commercials for Pillsbury's Toaster Stroodle and in October filmed an "independent Canadian movie."

"It's work," says Byrn. "I gotta pay the bills."

The second comedian, Tim Nutt, 30, of Toronto, says jokingly, "I'm not to be trusted."

The longhaired giant, who "listens to Metallica," had the crowd laughing hysterically at his jokes about his name "Nutt" and stories of camping and how he hates it.

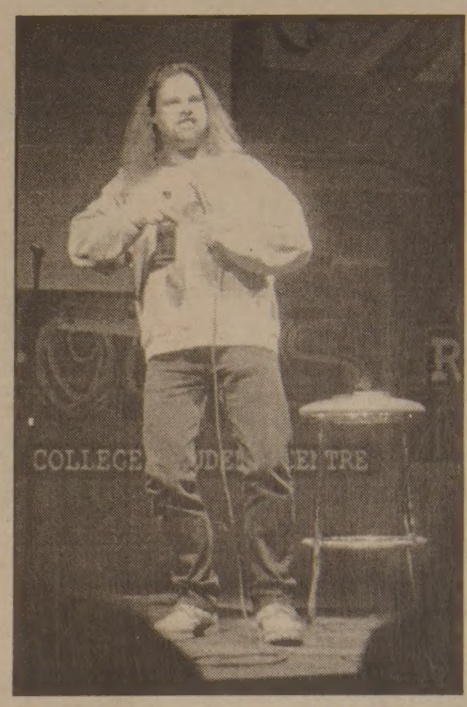
His patriotic view that the "Hockey Night in Canada song should be our national anthem," and his hate for the Buffalo Sabres hockey team got a well-deserved Canadian cheer.

Nutt is no stranger to After Hours. He has performed here "four or five times."

Nutts' philosophy of comedy is "It beats workin' for a living."

Tammy Pierce, 19, of Listowel is taking the Scial Worker program. She says, "I thought they were funny." Some of Byrn's material was "gross" says Pierce.

"I love Tim Nutt," says Ida Astorino, 20, from Niagara Falls. Both comedians "were good," she



Tim Nutt strikes a pose at After Hours.
Photo by Mark Garrett

Music Reviews

Chart topper risque

By MONICA PALINIEWICZ
Staff Writer

Missy Elliot has again brought the world a controversial release which has been gaining unquestioned notoriety.

The first single from the album Da Teal World, Hot Boyz, featuring Nas, Eve and Q-Tip, is already climbing the billboard charts. It ranks number seven this week.

This 1999 album release has sexual overtures to a new extreme, in a no-holds-barred fashion.

Elliot's to-the-point lyrics deliver shock value for the virgin Elliot listeners while her ongoing, loyal fans applaud her for another outspoken hip-hop album.

On the album, Elliot delivers many guest vocals from Eminem, Redman, Lil Kim, Da Brat, Juvenile and MC Solaar.

Da Teal World

Having a strong sexual presentation, as well as the common girl-against-girl rivalry over a playing-around/cheating man, this album will have many nodding their heads in agreement with Elliot's lyrics, once the initial shock has passed.

This album is a must-have for any true fan of hip-hop looking for this style of music to be brought to a new level.

With this new album, Missy Misdemeanor Elliot undoubtedly tells her listeners the harsh realities of "da real world."

Bob Marley lives

By MONICA PALINIEWICZ
Staff Writer

From Bob Marley's vast collection of rasta-reggae hits comes a new, innovative album, Chant Down on Babylon.

Through the power of technology, this album features guest vocals incorporated with the late Bob Marley's.

These guests include Erykah Badu, Busta Rhymes and Flipmode Squad, Lauryn Hill, The Roots, Chuck D, and Steve Tyler and Joe Perry of Aerosmith.

These amazing collaborations give Marley's old hits, such as Rebel Music, Concrete Jungle, Jammin' and Turn Your Lights Down Low, a fresh new sound with the help of various talented hip-hop and R and B artists. Turn Your Lights Down Low has recently been receiving frequent radio play.

Chant Down on Babylon

This album promises to flourish and should draw in a new fan base for Marley's sound with the presence of such prominent guest vocals on this new release.

This album is a excellent addition to the collections of any true fans of rasta, reggae and the memorable Bob Marley.

Winterfest successful

By MIRANDA HUBBS
Staff Writer

Winterfest 2000 (W2K) went off without a glitch.

During the weeklong festivities at After Hours on the Welland Campus last week, Niagara College students formed five five-member groups and competed in contests for milk chugging, Jell-O-sucking, air-band and other fun activities planned by the Student Administrative Council (SAC).

Despite the one-week postponement the general opinion of those involved was that they had "a great time."

SAC member and co-organizer Jeff Dutcher says, "I have only heard good things about W2K. Everyone had a good time, and it was exciting to see everyone out there having fun."

The results of W2K are as follows: team two took first place and received limousine service for six hours, sweatshirts for the whole team and $500 cash. Team three came in second and received an MT Bellies' restaurant gift certificate for $100, sweatshirts and $250 cash. Finally, in third place, came team one, who won $25 CD gift certificates, SAC watches and $100 cash. All contestants got W2K T-shirts and were thanked for coming out.

Organizers say Winterfest allows students the chance to cut loose and be creative. It also has nothing to do with college, which "makes it better."

Those involved said they might come back out next year because of the fun they had this year.

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SPORTS

Competing at top levels

By RAM KRISHNAMURTHY
Staff Writer

Three Niagara College students recently participated in a three-on-three international soccer competition in Orlando, Fla., with some pretty satisfying results.

Aldo Santopadre, 21, Steve Giamarco, 21, and Tony Dimartino, 22, all of Niagara Falls, Ont., were three of the five players in the event.

Santopadre is a first-year student in the Recreation and Leisure Services program, Giamarco, a second-year Business Administration program student and Dimartino, who is in the Construction Engineering Technology program.

It began early last summer when the threesome, who compete in the Niagara Falls men's league as the Hardrocks, were approached about entering a three-on-three soccer tournament in Buffalo, N.Y. The men went to the tournament and, simply, dominated, capturing the title.

As winners in Buffalo, the trio were to move on to the regionals in Philadelphia. That was what was supposed to have happened. Because of poor field conditions in Philly, the regional event was cancelled. However, that didn't mean the end of the line for the Hardrocks. The Hardrock Café in Niagara Falls was the team's main sponsor.

The regional winner was supposed to qualify for the nationals in Orlando, Fla. Despite the fact the regional competition didn't occur, the Hardrocks were asked

The Hardrocks is a team from Niagara Falls who competed in a three-on-three soccer tournament in Orlando, Fla.

Submitted photo

if they'd be interested in raising funds for themselves and taking part in the Orlando event. They were.

The event did happen the weekend of Jan. 15 and 16 in the sunshine state.

"It was a great experience," said Santopadre, "not only the Florida event, but in Buffalo as well."

The Orlando nationals hosted a 20-team event, consisting of teams competing in round robin play before qualifying for the playoff rounds. The soccer field was 40 yards in length and 30 yards in width. Games consisted of two 12-minute halves.

The Hardrocks put together one win and one loss and collected one tie in the round robin before their first-round 4-3 victory over a team from Toledo. The Hardrocks then went on to defeat a team from Pennsylvania by a score of 6-5.

"It was great to have the opportunity to compete against such tremendous talent," said Giamarco. The Hardrocks displayed their own great talent by reaching the level of competition they did.

Unfortunately, all good things come to an end, and for the Hardrocks it came in the form of a 5-0 loss to one of the host teams from Orlando in the championship match.

The Hardrocks, however, acknowledge they went a long way and are satisfied with their efforts. Santopadre said, "We now know that we have the talent to compete with some great talent. Maybe we will be back next year to take another shot at it."

Niagara wins as Ellis leads team with 33 points

By MIKE WENCEL
Staff Writer

An overtime win on Jan. 29 for Niagara College's men's basketball team has created a first-place tie in league standings.

Ernell Ellis captured the spotlight again by leading the team with a 33-point performance. Ellis, the Knights' big man, leads the league in scoring with 25.3 points per game, and spearheaded the team's 83-78 win.

"He has such a soft touch under the net, and no one seems to stop him," said Ray Sarkis, athletic co-ordinator of the college.

"It's amazing how much talent he has, only playing since Grade 12."

The Knights, down by 25 points at one time in the first half, brought the score to a nine-point deficit by halftime.

"Our guys were a little tight at the beginning, then adjusted their defence to bring back the score," said Sarkis.

A key factor in the game was Curtis Francis's 21 points, stepping up his performance at the point position. Francis's scoring big numbers puts him in sixth place in the scoring title with a 17.4 points per game record in the West region.

"Francis has really stepped up his game lately, just what we expected him to do," said Sarkis, adding, "It really helps out since Haldon Hutchinson is still injured."

Other players scoring double figures were Kyle Handrahan and Aaron Paisley, each finishing with 10 points.

With a limited bench and playing only seven players, Sarkis credits Ralph Nero, the Knights' head coach for his hard work bringing the team to the top of the league.

"It's really amazing how these guys find a way to win. They're just playing outstanding basketball and working really hard," said Sarkis.

Sarkis predicts the Knights will finish in either second or first place, which will be the best finish the men's team has ever had.

"Our recruiting is the best it has ever been. The coaches are travelling all over Ontario looking for players for the up and coming season."

Sarkis said the coaching staff is raising the profile of the basketball program, so finishing the season at the top of the standings will help the program in the future.

Niagara Knights men's volleyball team defeats Humber

By JASON VIZBULIS
Staff Writer

Revenge is sweet, especially when it's against the league leader.

The Niagara College men's volleyball team beat Humber College, of Etobicoke, four games to one. The win puts Niagara College in a tie with Humber in the Ontario Colleges Athletic Associations West division.

Blair Cudmore, Niagara coach, said the win helped the team's chances at post-season action. "We were playing for the league championship. All we have to do now is win our next two games and we're in (to) qualify us for the provincial championships."

Cudmore said he was unhappy with the officiating in the game held in Humber on Nov. 20 when Niagara suffered its only regular-season loss.

"The refereeing didn't play a big part in this game," said Cudmore. "It was an excellent outcome."

Graeme Gaunt was once again the offensive leader. He got 20 kills and two stuffed blocks, while Matt Piccolo had seven kills, six stuffed blocks and a service ace.

The loud fans played an important role in the win.

Matt Piccolo attempts a kill. The men's volleyball team beat league leader Humber College, four games to one.

Photo by Jason Vizbulis

"It's nice to play at home for the home fans," Kirby Bentley, team captain, said. He had nine kills. "They (Humber) had their fans there too, so it made for a nice rivalry. If the fans didn't show, our momentum might not have been so high. I thank the fans a lot."

Cudmore and Bentley said the presence of Shawn Barbison and Cuneyt Akgol helped in the win. Both players returned to the lineup after missing the first half of the season. "Shawn Barbison is a phenomenal blocker and excellent athlete. He helped us out a lot," Cudmore said.

Bentley said Akol "is definitely one of the better setters in the league. Last year he was an all-star setter but because of his height we had to move him to libero, a position that was designed for him."

The libero is a position for players who are "better passers and diggers," said Ray Sarkis, the college's head of athletics.

The libero can only play in the back court and can substitute in and out of the game freely. That player wears a different colour jersey so the officials can tell who's playing that position. This is the first year the position has been put into use.

Niagara's next game is against Seneca College, of North York, on Tuesday, Feb. 8, at 8:30 p.m. at the Welland campus gym.

SPORTS

Welland campus gym in need of new floor

Ray Sarkis, head of athletics, points out one of the many dead spots on the gym floor. The floor is over 30 years old and is in desperate need of being replaced.

Photo by Jason Vizbulis

By JASON VIZBULIS
Staff Writer

Niagara College's Welland campus gym floor has seen better days.

The gym floor, more than 30 years old, is the original floor installed when the college opened in 1967. The floor is inadequate for the college's needs.

Ray Sarkis, head of athletics, said, "We don't know if the concrete under here is gone or not but we know there's problems. There are a lot of dead spots. Students are getting hurt with shin splints and back injuries."

Sarkis said that even setting up equipment can be a problem. "When I put up a volleyball net we can't get it even because the floor is high at one end and lower at the other."

During a recent men's volleyball game against Humber, a part of the floor came apart. The game had to be stopped while the part was put back into place. This interrupted the flow of the exciting, important game. Sarkis said the interruption was "embarrassing" and that it happens often.

> ***'Students are getting hurt with shin splints and back injuries.'***
> ***— Ray Sarkis***

The cost of the new floor will be between $150,000 and $200,000. The cost will be split with the college paying 50 per cent, the Student Administrative Council (SAC) paying 25 per cent and the athletic department paying the remaining 25 per cent.

Kevin Reles, president of the SAC at the Glendale campus, said, "SAC is going to help them. It's set out in our budget how much we will pay." SAC will pay 25 per cent of the cost of the floor but not more than $25,000. Reles said 85 per cent of the time students are using the gym and "SAC is here to help the students."

Reles is investigating using the old floor for promotional purposes. He said it might be cut up and put on a plaque and given to Niagara College President Dan Patterson and past athletes who used the gym.

Hans van der Slagt, vice-president of administration, said there "is a budget process we go through." Van der Slagt said he expects the funding request to be passed and the issue will be given "high priority."

Corporation Bowl an international spectacle

By MARTIN McQUAIG
Staff Writer
Column

Now that we have the guacamole and Budweiser out of our systems, let us have an objective look at the three-hour debacle that invades airwaves worldwide each January: the mindless corporate-driven spectacle America chooses as its annual showcase to the world.

Last Sunday's Super Bowl, Super-bore, Super-snore, or, for some the Super-bowel, was a treat as always, offering a little bit of something to everyone.

I attended an annual party in Fonthill, because my philosophy is "even if the game stinks, we're having pizza and chicken wings at halftime."

My girlfriend, at her first Super Bowl party, set a record for longest time not being put to sleep by the wisdom of ABC colour man Boomer Esiason. She nearly made it through the third quarter.

I thought it was unfortunate the network didn't hire the guy who hands out pamphlets on "how you're going to hell" outside the stadium every Sunday, to interview St. Louis Rams' quarterback Kurt Warner. I hope God helps him get a bigger contract in the off-season so he can shave and his wife can see a cosmetician.

Speaking of God, here's an interesting observation.

No sooner had someone at the party made note of the swift flow of the game and its repercussions on possible advertising time, than Tennessee Titans' defender Blaine Bishop took a nasty knock on the neck.

While the faithful athletes knelt and prayed for the health of their friend and colleague, the prayers of the network executives were answered, as God gave them a window for some more advertisements to the sweet tune of $4 million a minute.

They could be on to something here.

Next year, you might hear Al Michaels say, "This career-threatening injury is brought to you by Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream!"

Maybe the coin toss will become the Frito-Lay chip toss: heads will become Nacho cheese, and tails, Cool Ranch. The company will be charged by the number of revolutions of the chip before it hits the turf and the loser proclaims, "Aw, man, I thought that was the Cool Ranch side."

Although the scoreboard showed the Titans came up short, the real losers in this whole thing are the good people of Canada. We're paying big bucks to cable companies who block out the American signal in favour of Global Television's offering of the same boring ads we've been subjected to all year.

These terrible ads always recycle the same three or four actors, and often with at least one Degrassi alumnus (you know who they are).

When we miss out on these new American commercials, we miss out big. The next Crystal Pepsi might be on the shelves right now and we wouldn't even know it.

I've got to hand it to Rams' coach Dick Vermeil though. The only time he cried Sunday was during Phil Collins' awful halftime performance.

Wrestling fun without depravity

By ROBERT LAPENSÉE
Staff Writer
Column

Racy content in some leagues still OK for adult viewers

Last week, the Empire Wrestling Federation (EWF) came to Niagara College and gave students some great action. There was a diverse crowd, full of men, women and children. Everyone had fun.

The EWF put on a show without bleeding, swearing or nudity. It was really toned down compared with the racy content of the World Wrestling Federation (WWF), Extreme Championship Wrestling (ECW) and World Championship Wrestling (WCW). Although it was toned down, everyone still had fun.

I don't mind the content of the WWF, WCW or ECW. I feel wrestling is at its most exciting there. My beef is the way these promotions market themselves.

We all know where wrestling was as a spectator sport a few years ago. Vince McMahon revolutionized the industry in the 1980s by changing wrestling so everyone — men, women and especially children — could enjoy it. It was tame and McMahon was being called the Walt Disney of the wrestling world. There were toys made for children. There were video games made for children. Hey, there was even a children's-cartoon produced for Saturday mornings.

McMahon marketed the WWF to include children in its demographic, and the content was adapted to suit that market. These days, after McMahon had changed wrestling again to suit the new "attitude" of the 1990s, children are still included in the demographic.

That's my problem. Monday night wrestling shows such as WWF Warzone are OK for my viewing, but are not appropriate for children. The WWF has a disclaimer and has publicly said its shows are geared for the 18-to-36 age group.

No. The shows still appear during prime time hours in the U.S. and some nights on TSN in Canada, when children can see them. The shows also appear after school on Tuesday afternoon, although this is the last week TSN will show WWF Warzone in this time slot. The WWF is still producing toys and video games for children. How can they say they no longer market their shows to children?

As far as I'm concerned, the WWF is a great promotor. I enjoy their program, their wrestling and their stories, but I've got to tell you WWF Attitude is not for kids.

It is time for the weekly question. Just email your answer, name and program to me at niagaranews@yahoo.com, or you can write your answer down on paper and bring it to the Journalism-Print newsroom S212 at the Welland campus by Wednesday. The first person to get the answer right will get an honourable mention in next week's issue.

Here's the question: Which Ontario city hosted the very first Royal Rumble before it became an annual Pay-Per-View event?

The answer to last week's wrestling trivia was Chris Benoit. No one was able to correctly answer the question. Good luck this week.

Correction

In the Jan. 28, 2000, edition of Niagara News, there were two errors in the teen ball hockey story on page 17. There are no body checks allowed because it is a non-contact sport. Also, the $150-per-team fee normally goes to help pay for the arena, but the arena is generously donated for that day by The Welland Street Hockey Centre.

It is the policy of the Niagara News to correct errors of fact.

CALLING ALL BANDS

The Niagara News is now taking reservations for bands who want to be published in *Riding the Riff* #IV, a music feature to be published **March 24, 2000.**

Qualifications:
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Feb. 11/00	March 17/00
Feb. 18/00	March 24/00
BREAK WEEK	April 7/00
	April 21/00

THE Niagara News does not attest to the claims of any employment opportunity and encourages all those interested in any position offered to fully research every opportunity.

THE Ontario Human Rights Code, 1981, prohibits discrimmination because of race, ancestry, place of origin, colour, ethnic origin, citizenship, creed, sex, sexual orientation, age, marital status, or handicap in "Accommodation" and "Employment" advertisements. The Niagara News reserves the right to make any necessary changes in advertising copy.

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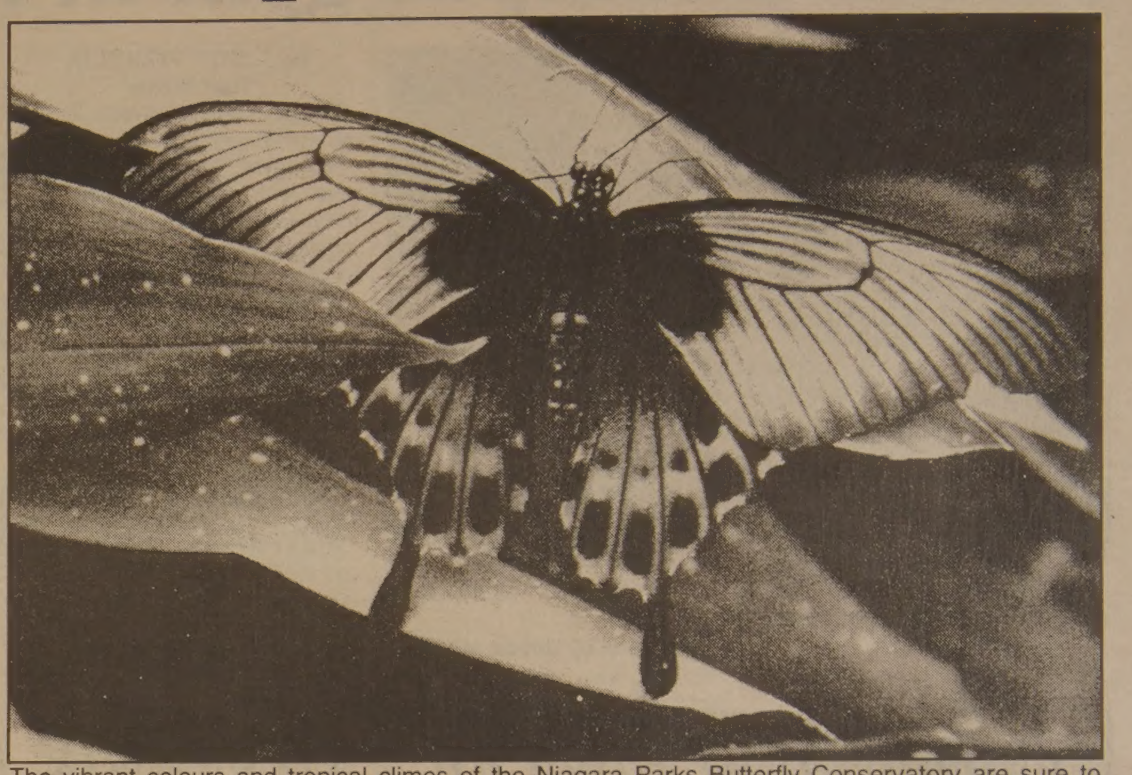
EYE ON NIAGARA

Escape winter blues



The vibrant colours and tropical climes of the Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory are sure to chase away the winter blahs.

Photo by Tara Purpura

Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory offers educational programs

By TARA PURPURA
Staff Writer

Canadians often migrate south this time of year to more tropical climes, but a more cost-efficient relief from the cold, wet weather is just up the road and offers a year-round tropical atmosphere.

The Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory boasts around 40 species of butterfly, Eurasian quails, green iguanas, turtles and goldfish. The exhibit hall displays live caterpillars as well as walking stick insects.

The types of butterflies in the conservatory are varied.

"Between what we breed here and what are shipped in, we put about 1,000 to 1,500 butterflies into the conservatory each week," said Margaret Pickles, assistant curator.

The conservatory receives tropical butterflies from Central America and Indo-Asia weekly. The butterflies are shipped during the chrysalis stage and displayed in the emergence window of the conservatory for patrons to view.

Species are also bred at the conservatory. With 40 cages in the breeding facility (which is closed to the public to protect the plants and species) and importing, the number of butterflies within the conservatory is maintained at about 2,000 to keep up with the two- to three-week life span of the insects, said Pickles.

The types of butterflies in the conservatory are varied but share one common characteristic: their colours serve a particular purpose.

Aside from aesthetic purposes, their characteristic shades are designed to protect the butterfly from predators. One of the most visible and prevalent species on display, The Magnificent Owl, from Central and South America, has a pattern on its wings that strongly resembles a large eye, making the large butterfly startling to predators.

Timing is ideal for local people who wish to avoid the tourist crowd.

The population of human visitors to the conservatory drops from 3,000 a day in the summer to 600 a day in the winter. Fewer visitors mean the timing is ideal for local people who wish to avoid the tourist crowd. The conservatory is a tropical retreat for anyone with the winter blahs.

The plants within the conservatory are collections from the Botanical Gardens and are cultivated in the conservatory's greenhouse.

The False Vervain, a purple flowering plant native to Costa Rica, provides nectar for the insects and is grown in the conservatory. Although the plant could be trimmed for re-growth after its bloom has passed, it is not re-cultivated, said Pickles, because biological controls used in the conservatory would "contaminate" the environmentally controlled greenhouses.

For the butterflies that do not feed on nectar, fruit trays are placed in the conservatory. The *Magnificent Owl* and *Blue Morpho* butterflies frequent the fruit feeders, allowing visitors to view the species while they rest and feed.

The Zebra and Postman (both Longwing species) are highly visible, with their yellow and red striped wings, while feeding on nectar of the False Vervain.

The Eurasian quails that reside in the conservatory scurry around in the undergrowth and maintain a natural balance in the conservatory by eating the dead butterflies.

Iguanas can be seen basking in the warm, brightly lit areas, and turtles are visible in the small pool or warming themselves on the rock ledge.

The varied insect species in the conservatory raises the question of territory. The Blue Morphos can be "quite" territorial, said Pickles.

"Because of the large space and quantity of food, however, the species exist in relative harmony," Pickles said.

The stages or lifecycles of the butterfly are displayed in the exhibit hall. The life of a butterfly is documented from egg, to larva (the caterpillars are displayed), to pupal (chrysalis) and finally to the fully mature stage of butterfly.

The Niagara Parks Butterfly Conservatory holds educational programs year-round.

March Break family programs will take place twice daily from March 13 to 17. Each program will include a presentation and craft. Pre-registration is required. Call 1-877-642-7275 for more information.

News Off Campus

Alert team ready to aid homeless in windy weather

By MANDI SPEELMAN
Staff Writer

A cold weather alert, issued Jan. 13, will help protect the Niagara region's homeless.

"Low temperatures and the wind-chill have combined to create health and safety risks for the most vulnerable in our communities, as well as those who enjoy good health," says Dr. Robin Williams, medical officer of health in St. Catharines.

The alert team, who represent community agencies such as the Community Resource and Action Centre in Welland, and the Housing Help Centre in Fort Erie, take action when temperatures plunge below -15 Celsius without wind-chill, or when severe winter weather is predicted. The weather is monitored from Nov. 15 to April 15.

Several of these agencies have responsibilities to communicate with other community groups during an alert.

"We help supply the homeless with blankets, sleeping bags and warm clothing. We also supply for the homeless that refuse to come into the shelters during the cold weather," says Dr. David Klooz, assistant department director at Regional Niagara's public health department in St. Catharines.

The alert team works closely to recognize those at risk, to share and hand out resources, to locate available shelter and to move homeless people to those sites.

Klooz says it has been fortunate there have been no deaths at this time because of the cold.

Although the alert team helps to protect primarily the homeless, people of all ages need to take precautions in the cold weather.

"People can get frostbitten or can get hypothermia," he says.

Williams says early signs of hypothermia include weakness, shivering, fatigue, slurred speech, dizziness and confusion.

"I read about people who fell through the ice and, within a minute to a minute and a half, developed hypothermia," says Klooz.

When someone is hypothermic, taking off the person's cold clothes and wrapping the body in a blanket should immediately warm the person and make the body temperature rise.

A media release from the Regional Municipality of Niagara public health department included these reminders for those heading out in the cold weather:

• Avoid outdoor exercise — Exercising in extreme cold weather, even for experienced athletes, can be unsafe. Exercise indoors until the cold spell ends.

• Understand wind-chill — As the speed of the wind increases, it can carry heat away from the body much more quickly. When there are high winds, even when temperatures are only cool, serious weather-related health problems are more likely.

• Adults and children should wear several layers of loose-fitting clothing, sleeves that are snug at the wrist, and mitts and hats. People should be sure the outer layer of their clothing is tightly woven (preferably wind resistant) to reduce body-heat loss caused by wind.

Titanic Exhibit provides historical perspective of shipwrecked graveyard

Titanic exhibition sails out of Toronto in February

By PAUL MOONEY
Staff Writer

Man waged an early war against nature during an era of optimism. The result: a ship thought to be unsinkable plunges to the bottom of the ocean after a collision with an iceberg while 1,500 people perish in the frigid sea.

The Titanic has been resurrected at Exhibition Place in Toronto until Feb. 10. Selected remains from the "ship of dreams" are on display. The Better Living Centre is housing the exhibit, presented by the Investors Group.

Visitors take an audio-guided tour through a cavern of artifacts. Designated areas of the expedition are dedicated to various aspects of the ship and its tragic maiden voyage.

The technology behind the Titanic's construction is critiqued in the first portion of the tour. Videos depict the labour and design responsible for the magnitude and speed of the ship. Models of the machinery used to discover the wreck are displayed in contrast with some of the Titanic's more primitive remains. Accompanied by a wall of videos, with recorded survivor recollections, this portion of the tour "sets the stage" for the scenes that follow.

Heroic tales of a dangerous recovery effort are shared with the audience in the second portion of the tour.

The submarine used for the rescue was initially not pressurized properly for the enormous descent. Complication after complication occurred prior to the team, RMS Titanic, being able to successfully return any artifact to the surface for inspection. This aspect of the tour created a greater appreciation for the viewing material.

After gaining an understanding of the effort required to obtain the priceless artifacts, the tour brought the visitors face to face with the tangible history of April 14, 1912.

A bronze cherub from the now-famous Grand Staircase served to be the most compelling item.

The cherub, in the form of an angel raising its hands to the sky, appeared to me as foreshadowing of the destined voyage.

Most important, a large segment was in reference to the Canadians aboard the Titanic. For each victim there was a massive board with detailed information concerning their family history as well as the circumstances by which they ended up on the ship.

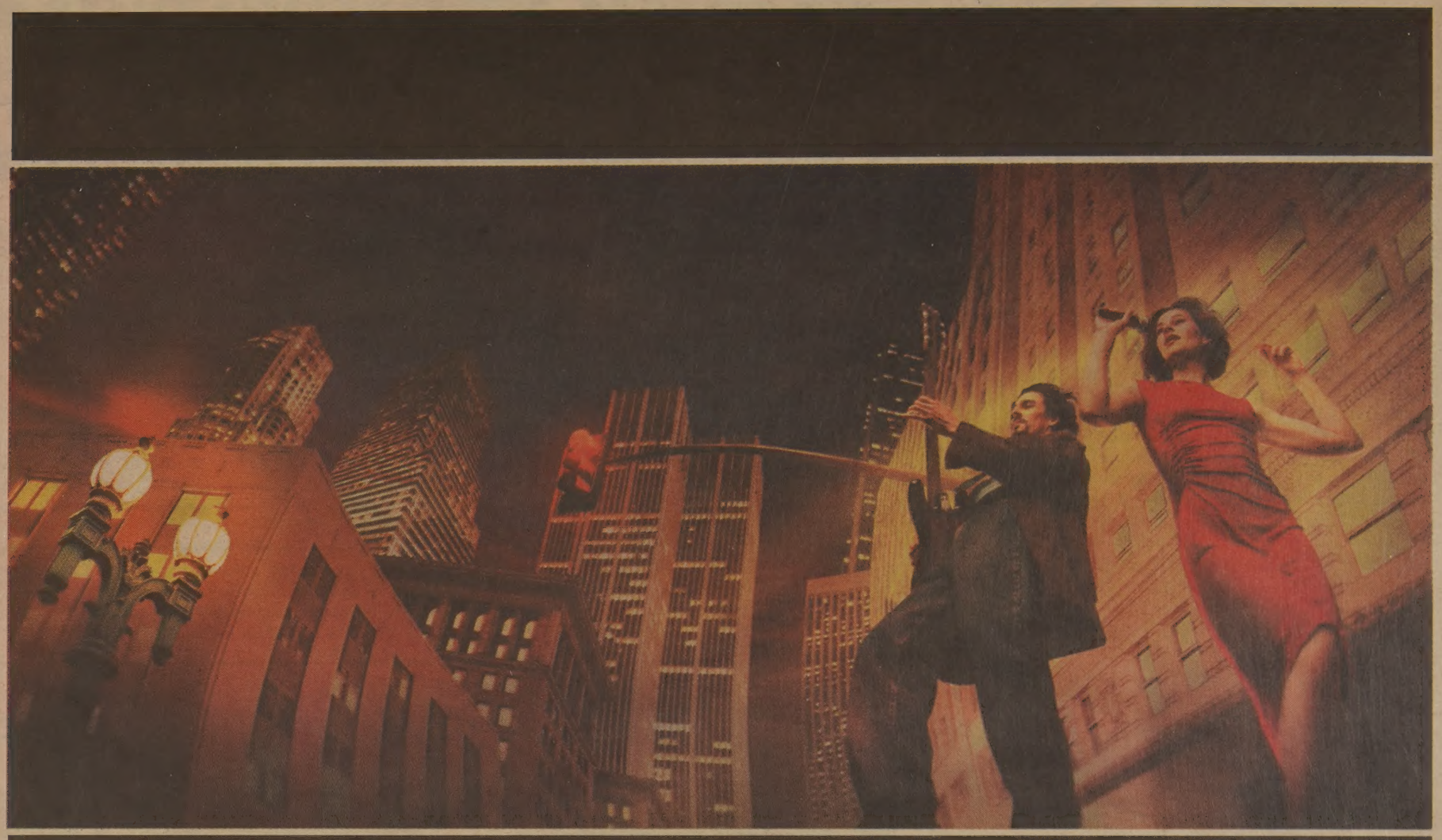
At end of the tour, I found myself quite disappointed that it was over. Seeing possessions of the deceased passengers was extremely moving. I strongly recommend the tour to anyone interested in the events that transpired more than 80 years ago.

If you're interested in visiting the exhibit the prices are $19.95 for adults (including students), $9.95 for children and $14.95 for seniors.

Too few of these cost Niagara game

Niagara Knight Izayana Chavez, 21, of Welland, gets ready to blast the ball at the Humber Hawks of Etobicoke at an exhibition game played on Jan. 28 at Niagara. The women lost three straight games to the Hawks, 25-6, 25-22 and 25-17. Their next game is tonight at the college at 6 p.m. against the Lambton Lions of Sarnia.

Photo by Sam Bayly



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